WTF KFC ATM LOLZ

Posted by: Mick on: 8 October 2010

In: Geeky | Innernets | Nerdlinger 2 Comments

Remember the days when the Internet first started and all of a sudden there was this new language to learn?

I think they called it 'net-speak' or something as innovative as that.

My first experience of such a phenomenon was the emoticon, back in 1994. I was one of those dorky Uni guys that would spend most of the day in the computer labs discovering this new thing called 'The Internet' which meant that I could talk to random strangers on the other side of the world IN REAL TIME.

I mean, how cool was that? I was saying something and then someone else was saying something back, and it's not even a phone!

So, anyway, I was using Telnet to connect to these servers which hosted things called MUDS, or MUCKS where you would connect to a virtual world as a character and then go around talking to people, jumping around and being a fool or doing other such unsavoury activities that a 17 year old might do. Especially when you are 17 year old that spends all day in a computer lab.

I digress. I started noticing people were ending their sentences with 😀 or 😉 . I thought it was some sort of way to end a sentence, or that they had simply added extra random characters at the end of their line.

Then one day, someone told me to turn my head to the left.

All of a sudden, 😀 became something different altogether.

Over the coming years we would be bombarded with every emoticon possible. Even Slash uses his special Slash emoticon on this twitter feed – Iii|;)

Not only was the emoticon an innovation, so were the net acronyms. The first one I came across was brb, closely followed by bbs, atm, irl and ttfn. Although to be fair, ttfn was stolen from Tigger.

Of course, the big one. The real doozy of a netcronym (like what I did there?) is LOL. Fucking Laugh Out Fucking Loud. It shits me. It always has. I have never used it. I don't laugh out loud very often I guess, but really, does anyone that writes LOL really Laugh Out Loud when they are typing? Based on my in-depth research I would say. NO.

Instead, I use the eloquent and succinct 'hehehe'. You see, it gives the impression that you think something is funny with a little snigger, but doesn't go over the top with the whole boisterous laugh about something not very funny.

The even weirder thing is that nowadays the old acronyms are becoming everyday vernacular.

People are LOLing and OMGing all over the place. I have been known to drop to odd ZOMG and FFS as well.

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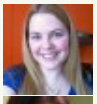
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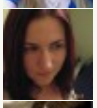
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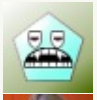
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I have no problem with this, for the most part. I feel that I am a part of the generation that helped to bring The Internet to the masses and reveal this whole other side of geekdom.

I may not use telnet any more, but it's sure nice to know that 16 years later there are still remnants of those first few weeks of 'online' time that live on today..

Oh yeah, and enjoy this clip

Tags: acronyms, internet, web, lol

Music conquers all

Posted by: Mick on: 29 September 2010

In: JJJ | Music 2 Comments

One of the main reasons I want to get this blog going again is to bang on about my love of music, concerts and Triple J.

If you know me, you know that I am a vocal supporter of music I love and I try to get to as many concerts as I can.

Having said that, the first half of this year was quite slack for concerts.

The second half of this year includes: Metallica, Regurgitator, The Tongue, Powderfinger, Metallica (again), Muse, U2.

Another reason I wanted to post is because the ARIA Award Nominations are up again.

I have enjoyed commenting on previous awards and nominations as you can tell...

So, it's time to comment on this years nominations, and I must say I am pleasantly surprised.

Gone are the days that new Australian music was dominated by Neighbours stars, dodgy guitar bands or Farnsy coming back (oh wait, he's got a new album. WTF!?)

It seems that new music is being dictated by hard working indie (sometimes) bands and artists rather than the major label pushed carbon copies that we've seen in the past. This is great news for artists like Angus & Julia Stone, Tame Impala, Washington and Lisa Mitchell.

Just check out the noms for Best Album!

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NSW Blogs

Album of the Year

Angus & Julia Stone - *Down The Way* – These guys have been so damn impressive since I first heard their EP about 4 years ago. I finally saw them live on a big stage at a festival in England and they were one of the highlights of the whole 3 days. Not just for me, but many others. Beautiful voices and very VERY talented.

Birds of Tokyo – *Birds Of Tokyo* – I have been torn on these guys. Their first album came out when I was in the US, so I didn't hear it till the hype and died down and I thought they were just a little bit commericial and had that dreaded 'Pop Rock' vibe. A'la Nickelback, Creed etc.. Then I find out that the lead singer is Ian Kenny, of Karnivool fame. What the hell is he doing fronting this 'soft' rock band? This made me listen to them a little more, but still, I find it hard to get into them. They sound like a mix of Silverchair and INXS. Obviously the commercial tilt of their music helps get gigs on Sunrise and The Footy Show, so I can't begrudge them the success, but still, not really my cup of tea.

Sia – *We Are Born* – What can be said about this woman. She's done a lap of the world and now comes back to Australia to conquer with this amazing new sound. This album almost never happened as her record company wanted her to continue to release the slow, croony atmospheric music that she's been known for. Instead she gets out of her contract, releases her poppiest album ever and blows us all away. Love the new stuff. Love the old stuff. Love Sia.

Tame Impala – *Innerspeaker* - If you are happy to be transported to the decade of the 1970's, the era of wah-wah guitars, bong smoke and reverberating vocals, then you will love Tame Impala. They have been a slow burner with me. I heard their early stuff and was only slightly impressed, but after witnessing them on-stage at this years Big Day Out and then hearing their new album my eyes have opened wider to them. Not only for their new take on an old genre, but the epicness of their sound. I am happy to see them nommed here. They could have very easily been wisped away in clouds of hemp...

Washington – *I Believe You Liar* - Anyone that saw Megan Washington on Spicks and Specks earlier in the year would have immediately understood that this woman is going to go far. She has the charisma, personality but most importantly THE VOICE to take the world by storm. For a band to come from being unearthed by Triple J in November 2008 to being nommed for Best Album within 2 years is impressive to say the least! Admittedly I haven't listened to this album enough to really appreciate it, but great to see them nominated.

I wonder if there are people out there that have not heard of any of these artists. I could understand if Tame Impala and Washington may not be widely played on commercial radio across the country, but I would be very disappointed if people had not heard of Sia, Birds of Tokyo and the Stone siblings.

The fact that all 5 bands are heavily rotated on Triple J is not a fluke. They are the biggets supporters of Australian music in the country. It's almost become a machine in itself, the Triple J unearthed machine. It's so massive that I guess you can never give exposure to every talented artist in the country, but at least, bit by bit, they get airplay, exposure and the chance to show their stuff.

The rest of the noms: (my tip to win has a ✓)

Single of the Year

Angus & Julia Stone – *Big Jet Plane* (Original Matters/EMI)

- A Dying Star
- Alyndabear
- Curiouser and Curiouser
- Julaberry
- Life in the Country
- Little Shoo LIVE!
- Man of Lettuce
- nailpolishneurosis
- Pash or Ram?
- Sydney Spy
- Welcome to Nadstown

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- Me, myself and I
- MelbourneHumanFemale
- Naderine.com
- Scott, To Be Certain
- Spacky Jacky

Birds of Tokyo – *Plans* (EMI)

Sia – *Clap Your Hands* (Monkey Puzzle/Inertia)

The Temper Trap – *Love Lost* (Liberation Music)

✓ Washington – *How To Tame Lions* (Mercury/UMA)

> So hard to pick a winner in this category. They are seriously all excellent songs. I went for Washington simply because I think it's a little bit above Big Jet Plane and Clap Your Hands in my mind. Would really be happy for any of them to win though..

Best Female Artist

Clare Bowditch – *Modern Day Addiction* (Island/UMA)

Kylie Minogue – *Aphrodite* (Mushroom Records/Warner Music)

Lisa Mitchell – *Oh! Hark!* (Warner Music Australia)

✓ Sia – *We Are Born* (Monkey Puzzle/Inertia)

Washington - *I Believe You Liar* (Mercury/UMA)

> Have we had a stronger bunch of women nominees in recent history? I don't think so! Great to see Clare Bowditch get a nom, as well as Kylie even. I would love and am going for Sia to claim this award, but I reckon Washington will get it.

Best Male Artist

Dan Kelly – *Dan Kelly's Dream* (Shock)

✓ Dan Sultan – *Get Out While You Can* (MGM)

Guy Sebastian – *Like It Like That* (Sony Music)

John Butler – *April Uprising* (Jarrah Records/MGM)

Paul Dempsey - *Fast Friends* (EMI)

> Have you heard of Dan Sultan? He sounds like ~~Frank Sinatra~~ Elvis Presley (oops) and looks like Adonis. Seriously, he's got ALL that. The moves, the voice, the poses and the charisma. A deadset legend and I hope he gets this award although If Paul Dempsey got it, I would not be disappointed.

Best Group

Angus & Julia Stone – *Down The Way* (Original Matters/EMI)

Birds of Tokyo – *Birds Of Tokyo* (EMI)

Powderfinger – *Golden Rule* (UMA)

Tame Impala - *Innerspeaker* (Modular Recordings)

✓ The Temper Trap – *Love Lost* (Liberation Music)

> Again, I would not be upset if any of these bands won, even Powderfinger, even though their last album doesn't cut the mustard,

- Spatula City
- World. Oyster. Stage.
- [Miscellany]

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would be worthy winners of their 16th ARIA (thanks LaLa). I am picking Temper Trap to take this one though because they have really taken the world by storm in the last year or so and it would be worthy recognition for all their hard-work. I would love Angus & Julia Stone to get it as well, but they will get their chance..

Best Independent Release

✓ Art vs Science – *Magic Fountain* (Green/MGM)

Dan Sultan – *Get Out While You Can* (MGM)

Eddy Current Suppression Ring – *Rush to Relax* (Suppression Records/Shock)

John Butler Trio – *April Uprising* (Jarrah Records/MGM)

Sia – *We Are Born* (Monkey Puzzle/Inertia)

Eddy Cuz get a nomination for their kick-arse album. I would love to see them get up, but I think Art vs Science will get it for their seriously awesome song, Magic Fountain. Listen to it once and it'll be stuck in your head all day…

Best Adult Alternative Album

Angus & Julia Stone – *Down The Way* (Original Matters/EMI)

Basement Birds – *Basement Birds* (Basement Birds)

✓ Clare Bowditch – *Modern Day Addiction* (Island/UMA)

The Cat Empire – *Cinema* (EMI)

Washington – *I Believe You Liar* (Mercury/UMA)

Whitley – *Go Forth, Find Mammoth* (Dew Process/Universal Music)

Adult Alternative? What the hell is that? Is that for all us oldies that remember when Alternative music was Nirvana, Soundgarden and Pearl Jam? In any case, I hope Clare Bowditch picks this up. Not only is it a great album, but she's a great bird and I believe in sharing the awards around 🙂

Best Dance Release

Art vs Science – *Magic Fountain* (Green/MGM)

✓ Miami Horror Sometimes (EMI)

Midnight Juggernauts – *The Crystal Axis* (Siberia/Inertia)

Pendulum - *Immersion* (Warner Bros UK)

Yolanda Be Cool and Dcup – *We No Speak Americano* (Sweat it Out/Central Station Records)

Miami Horror should win this hands-down. They've had a massive year and have really exploded onto the local and international scene with this album. If Pendulum or Art vs Science win, I'd accept it..

Best Hard Rock/Heavy Metal Album

Airbourne – *No Guts, No Glory* (EMI)

✓ Dead Letter Circus – *This is the Warning* (Warner Music Australia)

Parkway Drive – *Deep Blue* (Resist Records/Shock)

The Amity Affliction – *Youngbloods* (Boomtown/Shock)

Violent Soho – *Violent Soho* (Liberation Music)

> Airbourne? I haven't ever heard these guys. Are they any good? What do they play? I didn't even realise they were Australian. Some solid competition in this category. Parkway Drive could win for pure Metal brilliance, but I would love to see Dead Letter Circus win to recognise their tireless touring and quality album.

Best Pop Release

✓ Bluejuice – *Head of the Hawk* (Dew Process/Universal Music)

Empire of the Sun – *Half Mast* (EMI)

Guy Sebastian – *Like It Like That* (Sony Music)

Kylie Minogue – *Aphrodite* (Warner Music Australia)

Sia – *We Are Born* (Monkey Puzzle/Inertia)

> Bluejuice, muthafuckas! So awesome that they have a nomination for their fantastic Head of the Hawk. I hope they win just for the simple fact that their acceptance speech will be awesome.

Best Rock Album

Birds of Tokyo – *Birds Of Tokyo* (EMI)

Cloud Control – *Bliss Release* (Ivy League Records/Universal)

Eddy Current Suppression Ring – *Rush to Relax* (Suppression Records/Shock)

Powderfinger – *Golden Rule* (UMA)

✓ Tame Impala - *Innerspeaker (*Modular Recordings)

> At least they've separated Rock and Hard Rock now. Not sure how Cloud Control are Rock though. Throw this in the air and see who wants it the most. If it knocks out Bernard Fanning, he's too old and then hand it to Tame Impala.

Best Urban Album

Bliss N Eso – *Running on Air* (Illusive Sounds)

Lowrider – *Round the World* (Illusive Sounds)

M-Phazes – *Good Gracious* (Obese Records)

Space Invadas – *Soul-Fi* (Invada/Inertia)

✓ Urthboy – *Spitshine* (Elefant Traks/Inertia)

My man Urthboy HAS to get this award or I will track down the voters and slap them. Legend album and legend dude.

Breakthrough Artist

Amy Meredith – *Restless* (Sony Music)

Cloud Control – *Bliss Release* (Ivy League Records/Universal)

✓ Philadelphia Grand Jury – *Hope is for Hopers* (Normal People Making Music/Boomtown/Shock)

Tame Impala – *Innerspeaker* (Modular Recordings)

Washington – *I Believe You Liar* (Mercury/UMA)

Hey, how did the Philly Jays get in here? I thought they'd been forgotten! I think they deserve to pick up this award. Sure, Washington will probably get it for their breakthrough stuff, but the Philly Jays have had a massive year and deserve some recognition.

——————————————-

There we go. My yearly wrap-up of the nominees. If you made it to the end, I commend you!

Give me your take on the nominees and who you think should win. After-all I am just speaking out of my butt most of the time..

Tags: Music, australian music, Australia, Triple J, aria, awards, triplej

Hi-8-Us Over.

Posted by: Mick on: 28 September 2010

In: Blogkeeping | Diary | Holidays 4 Comments

Let me just wipe the dust off this keyboard….

Oh…Hi! It's me…

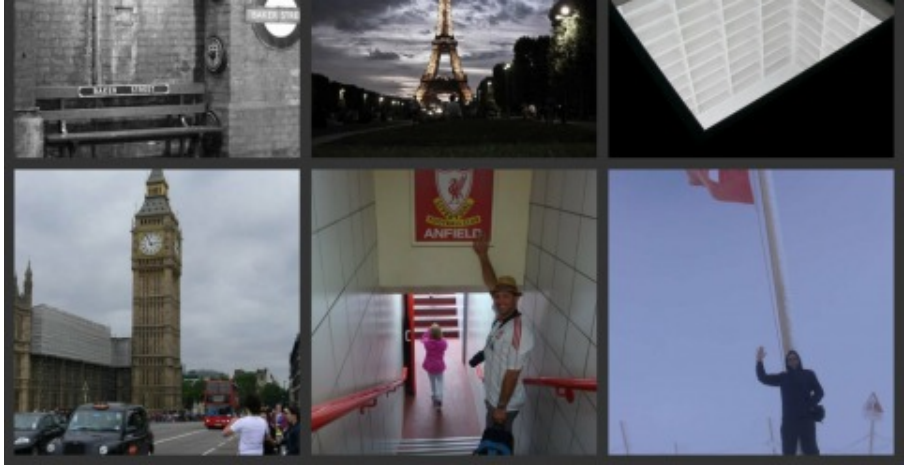
What's going on?

Well if you ever look at this blog you'd probably think, 'Not Much', but quite the contrary!

3 months ago I was talking about a trip to Europe.

(just ignore the line where I say I am going to update this blog more frequently. Lying obvs)

Well, it's been and gone folks, and what a trip!



I took over 2,000 photos on the trip and am still weeding through them.

It was a great 5 weeks. LaLa and I had a ball wherever we went and we didn't even stress too much when:

- the hire car was locked in a parking garage on a Sunday when we were leaving
- our room in Lauterbrunnen, Switzerland was the size of a shoebox
- a 2 hour search for Laksa in Kulala Lumpur was for nothing
- the toilets at the music festival in England had the most disgusting toilets in the world
- we made the bus for the Beatles 'Magical Mystery Tour' by 2 minutes.

Seriously, if you haven't been to Europe, go and do it. There's really no reason. Everyone speaks English, even if it is only 'a leetle beeet', the sights are even prettier than the photos and you don't have to go into every church you see.

We did a 2 week driving trip including 3,500km through 7 cities. It was pretty ambitious but it worked out really well, although perhaps a little too rushed.

Since returning it's back to the drudgery of the working week and not enough time to do anything on the weekend.

Fortunately the weather is starting to fine up (stupid Canberra winters) and motivation to get a pergola built, the house painted and the body fit are starting to take hold.

As for other things....

- I love Regurgitator
- AFL is stupid
- The Eels disappoint me again
- LaLa keeps me sane
- Computer games keep me from being bored
- I have 2 cars in the garage for the first time ever
- My body has survived a whole season of football (soccer)
- Probiotics are a medical miracle
- Car services suck
- Metallica are the bomb

I am getting to the time of year where I escape hibernation and feel the urge to be more active. It's a good thing.

As for this blog? Who knows. I am not going to close it, but I will try to keep it updated.

If you came here from my Twitter feed you would know what I am a lot more active on there than on here.

140 characters are a lot easier to type...

Thanks for reading. Comment if you like. Discuss amongst yourselves.

Flit, twit and wit

Posted by: Mick on: 8 July 2010

In: Uncategorized **1** Comment

Just so you know, I will be on twitter a bit during our trip.

Just click here to keep track!

The Future

Posted by: Mick on: 21 June 2010

In: Diary | Travelling **7** Comments

Welcome to the Future…..

……..now.

Hey! I'm here. I've never really gone anywhere, but I've just let the blog slide for a while.

Most of my slackness can be blamed on Life really. That thing called Life can really get in the way of blogging…about…life.

So….what's been happening?

Well…you know….not much.

When people say that, it really means they've been busy as hell but couldn't be bothered telling you about it.

Which is what I'm going to do. Not tell you about it. Because…I couldn't be bothered.

Truth me told, the 3 people that read this blog probably aren't too interested anyway 😀

BUT, the exciting news that is really the reason I am back here is that in 3 weeks time, the LaLa and I will be sunning (please be sunny) it up in Europe.

I intend to blog about our forthcoming trip to UK and Europe as a way to let you (3) folk know what it's like in the warmer hemisphere for a month or so.

Where are we headed?

UK, Scotland and then Western Europe.

Oh..and then a quick 2 day sojourn in Kuala Lumpur on the way back.

All within about 35 days.

I am hanging for this. Both of us have been We've been planning for this trip for the last 7 or 8 months, but only the last month or so have we really started to get into the nitty gritty. Most of the accommodation is locked in. Car Rental is done. Flights to Prague. Tickets to festivals. Tours of Anfield and Beatles stuff.

…and let's not forget the tickets to Lord's for the Australia v Pakistan Test Match.

Freaking bliss.

How's this for a nice little drive around the countryside in Western Europe?

So, I know more people have done the travelling thing, but I'm pretty green to it all. Fortunately LaLa is Lil Miss Traveller so she's been great at the suggestions. I'd still welcome any ideas or suggestions as to how to make a driving holiday of Western Europe simpler, easier or better in any way.

I think a GPS is a necessity. Whether we upgrade the maps on LaLa's old Navman, or we hire a new one, I think it will be a good idea to be able to have a little computer person tell us where to turn instead of interpreting signage.

I'm still undecided as to whether I take my laptop or not. Most of the places we're staying will have some sort of Wi-Fi, but then why will I need my laptop, other than to update twitter, blogging or read football scores.

I could just take my new Google Nexus phone, which has built in GPS and everything and is WAY better than those wanky iPhones thank you very much.

I'm a bit nervous about taking good stuff on the road with us as you never know where we might leave the car.

Am I being paranoid?

So, just to make you all a little more jealous, we're staying in some shit-hot hotels along the way. It's not that we're loaded to the gills with cashola, but I've just been quite patient and clever with finding places to stay. Travelzoo comes out with their Top 20 deals each week and I've managed to snaffle some sweet hotels in Prague, Kuala Lumpur and Paris. We found a very cool bomhemian style hotel in Berlin, and a homely chalet in the Swiss Alps.

We still have Amsterdam, Munich and Edinburgh to go, and then we'll be fully booked in.

Also, what do other travellers recommend for currency while we're there? I have noticed that Travelex have these cash passport things which you can load up with currency and then use like ATM cards wherever you like. We could load up a card with Pounds and another with Euro's for each part of the trip. That way we avoid conversion fees and holding too much cash. Any other suggestions are welcome though.

So, keep an eye-out, i'll be updating this more frequently in the coming months!

Tags: europe, hotels, travel, united kingdom

Footy Footy Footy!

Posted by: Mick on: 11 March 2010

In: Footy | Sport 2 Comments

Can you feel it?

It's March. Autumn. There's a nip in the air.

The sound of leather on willow is fading into obscurity and instead there's

the sound of grunting men, the smell of deep heat and the crinkle of the Daily Telegraph.

Footy season is BACK BABY!

Can you believe that it's been 5 months since that fateful and heartbreaking day in October last year?

We've endured one of the most boring summers of cricket ON RECORD and now the season is finally here.

Is there any game greater than Rugby League?

I think NOT.

And it all begins with a blockbuster tomorrow night. The Dragons take on the Eels at Parramatta Stadium.

And guess whose favourite blogger will be THERE. Yes indeedy. Me, my big inflatable finger, my 2009 Grand Finalist jersey and my Blue and Gold forever son will be front and centre (as long as on the try line and 3rd row in counts) for the big clash tomorrow night.

I am soooo pumped for this season and it seems that the pressure building for the Eels this season is almost unbearable. Will they crack under the pressure (again), or will they simply blow the opposition away like they did in those last 12 games in 2009?

I am nervous, excited and positively BUSTING to see what happens when it all kicks off.

Of course there are 15 other teams that the Eels will have to shrug off before October this season and here's Mick's Quick Guide to the 2010 NRL Season.

Listed in the order I think they will finish.

1. Parramatta Eels

Seriously, is there any doubt that the boys from the west can't go all the way this season? There are 2 vital pieces to the success of the Eels. Confidence and Positivity. As soon as the Eels lose either of these their heads drop and the chance of beating any team goes down the drain.

We have to play like we know how to. Throw the ball around. Run with flair. Take that chance. Chip that kick and back your ability to catch the opposition off guard. It is one of the things the Eels are famous for.

Our team is almost intact from last year except for the noticeable loss of Todd Lowrie, Kevin Kingston and Joe Galuvao. Throw in Tahu, Poore and Shackleton and you have more than made up for it. A fit Hayne, Ben Smith and Eric Grothe will also keep us confident through the thick of the season. Injuries are inevitable but we have debutant Tom Humble in the wings, as well as Krisnan Inu, Anthony Mitchell and Jonathan Wright ready to make their impact. THIS is the year my friends. It has to be.

2. Melbourne Storm

They are still the most dangerous team in the league. They prove that year after year . In fact 4 consecutive years in the grand final proves that. When you have Slater, Inglis, Cronk and Smith running at you, you need to pull out the drop drawer performance. Ironically it was the Origin ravaged Storm team in 2009 that started the Eels roll, but you can't bet on playing them when they're down cause they quickly get back off the mat.

I think this might be one of their last years in the top ranks of the game, but whilst Slater and Inglis are there you can never write them off. Come finals time, it's a different ball game. I hope they make way for another team this year. I think that team will be…

3. Canterbury Bulldogs

The rivallry of the Eels and Bulldogs in the 80´s is back. Judging by the most amazing game of football I've ever seen last year in the Preliminary Final. The Bulldogs have bounced back so fast from their disastrous 2008 season that the only way they can go is up and I think this year they will see an all Sydney Grand Final against the Mighty Eels.

Kimmorley continues to impress in his twilight years and along with a solid forward pack they're ready to pounce.

Don't get me wrong. I hate the Bulldogs with a passion, but I think they will have a big big year.

4. South Sydney Rabbitohs

The Rabbitohs have been seemingly in a 're-building' phase for a decade, but it's about time for them to show everyone what they've got. I think this season will be a massive year for them to go along with their massive forward pack. They've recruited ex-Bronco Dave Taylor to add to Sam Burgess and the front row is ready to explode.

I still can't get past the Rabbitohs being easy-beats. It seems that they have been for as long as I can remember, but it'd be nice to see them in front of the 8 ball for once and make the top 8 easily. I think the top 4 is a definite possibility.

5. Gold Coast Titans

They have a bit of a hodge-podge team. Players from all over the place that have taken a while to gel. They also can't seem to play without Preston Campbell, but they've recruited bad-boy Bird and he could make a big difference to their confidence.

I like their never say die attitude and I think they'll have another successful season. I just can't see them getting past week 1 or 2 of the finals though.

6. Wests Tigers

They've bought Tuqiri and Jason Cayless. 2 excellent buys for what could be a turning point season for the Tiges. They really should have made a better fist of it last year but their run home was disappointing (to Parra's glee!)

I am looking forward to a big season from Benji, as long as he doesn't break his toe, lung or little finger. If Farah can actually perform week to week, it will help as well. Just look out for when they click. They could push for a top 4 spot.

7. St. George-Illawarra Dragons

The perennial chokers of the league must feel like they are starting again. They had a massive 2009 and finished minor premiers, only to hit the Eels juggernaut in Finals Week 1. They never recovered. I think they've got massive potential in their team, but sometimes they just don't seem to know how to use it. You'd think Mr. Bennett would help with that and maybe this year he'll lead them to the top again.

I have a feeling that a depleted forward pack and injuries will plague them, and is Soward goes down, so does the team.

8. Sydney Roosters

As much as I hate to say it, I think the Roosters will sneak into the 8. It will be a tight finish with the Panthers but I reckon Todd Carney will have a massive season. He always showed so much promise in Canberra, but too many trips to 'All Bar Nun' and the 'Moose' ruined what could have been a beautiful friendship. They landed the wooden spoon last year, probably due to coaching issues (see ya Freddy0, but I think hard nose Brian Smith will drag them off the bottom this year and give them a finals appearance straight away.

9. Penrith Panthers

They always seem to under-achieve, the Panthers. I compare them to the Eels a lot. They have a lot of talent, but somehow it just doesn't seem to work sometimes. They also ride on confidence and if they win a couple, they'll start to look promising.

They've got Jennings, Kingston (from Parra), Laurie (from Tiges) and Civoniceva in their roster. Jennings is clearly a freak and should be up there with the Hayne's and Inglis's of the league. He can only get better this season and they will surely upset some big teams, but I think they will just miss out again.

10. Manly Sea-Eagles

Seriously, who really cares about this team? This pack of highfaluting silvertails from the north shore seemed to think they just had to turn up in 2009. Then it all fell apart for them and not least for Brett Stewart. They still have the talent to make a finals tilt, but with their over-sized houses, wallets and heads I don't think they'll make it out of the tunnel in time.

11. Canberra Raiders

Yes, I have a soft spot for the Raiders having lived here for 20 odd years. The thing is they will never reach those lofty heights of the 80´s and 90´s when Daley, Meninga, Clyde, Walters and Stuart ruled this town. I wish they would, but can you see Tongue, Purtell, Duggin, Harrison and Herbert being household names? I don't think so.

The other problem they have is that they just can't win outside of Canberra. It seems to be their continual problem. Year after year they pull out big victories against quality teams in the frigid weather of Canberra, but then they head to Townsville and can't spank the Cowboys in their backyard.

Hopefully this year will see some reversal of fortune because I would love League to be a buzz-word in this town again one day.

12. Brisbane Broncos

The mighty all fall eventually. The Broncos have had their day and no amount of Lockyer magic will save them this year. They will drop out of finals contention and Brisbane people won't even notice.

Mind you, I've said this before and then somehow they manage to claw their way back into the race. They've still got Folau, they've bought Tim Smith and Corey Parker can play, but somehow, I just think they're not going to have enough fire power.

13. North Queensland Cowboys

Another year and what could be the last chance for the Cowboys to hold onto Thurston. He may be a tool but he's still a top footy player and the Cowgirls have been riding on his plaits for a few years now. They still have some decent players to give them hope though, with Sam Rapira looking the goods, as well as veteran Luke O'Donnell and Willie Tonga. Oh, and I guess we can't forget the other Willie who has flipped the bird to Sydney and gone up North.

If Willie remembers how to play, Thurston stays off the drink and Ty Williams scores some tries they might have a chance, but somehow I reckon. No.

14. Newcastle Knights

Things just go from bad to worse for those keniggets. (Thank you Monty Python). First they lose the greatest player of all time (Joey Johns), then they lose a couple of coaches and then 2 players get done on drugs charges. All

the while they just can't seem to get any consistency on the paddock.

Oh, and let's not forget that Gidley injured himself in the All-stars game and will miss 4-6 weeks from the start of the season! I wouldn't be surprised if they're looking at the wooden spoon early in the season, but I expect things to pick up as the season warms up.

If coming 14th means they pick up very much. I only expect they'll win a handful of games.

15. New Zealand Warriors

Those players across the ditch never give up trying and you have to admire them for that. 2002 seems like such a long time ago for this team that is so desperate to win they're willing to part with millions of dollars to get $onny Bill Williams back into League (please no). The bonus with a team like the Warriors is that they have a whole country of talent to pull from and they really should be able to find some great up and coming talent. Apparently there's a guy called Kevin Locke that plays on the wing and he is toted to be the next big thing.

We shall see.

I don't expect them to have much of a season though. Maybe you should be looking in your backyard for talent, rather than over in French Rugby.

16. Cronulla Sharks

It still puts a smile on my face to picture Ricky Stuart coaching such a shocker of a team as the Sharks. Maybe if the coach just shut up for long enough the team might be able to concentrate on playing, but as usual Stuart is too busy writing columns and complaining about everything to do with Rugby League.

The team itself has recruited wildly in the off season. Not that you would notice. None of them are particularly noticeable signings. Luke Douglas? Paul Aiton?

Sure, they have picked up a couple of younger players from my beloved Eels (Kelly, Gardner and Wright), but it will take a few years for these guys to make an impact in the top grade.

I actually want the Sharks to go better, for their players and their fans, but whilst Stuart is at the helm, they can languish with the spoon for as long as possible.

There we go.

THE definitive guide to the season.

Let's not refer to this post in October though. No point looking to the past...

Enjoy!

Tags: 2010, Footy, nrl, rugby league, season preview

Mick's Monthly Pick for March

Posted by: Mick on: 10 March 2010

In: Mick's Picks | Music Leave a Comment

New regular post alert! (that's almost laughable!)

Every month I am going to try and pick a song that I suggest you check out.

This month it is from the band Surfer Blood

They have a distinctive style with echoey vocals reminiscent of old surfer

tunes from the Beach Boys, but with indie guitars and rocking drums.

I reckon these kids are going to go far!

Take a listen to some of their tracks on their myspace and tell me what you think!

This is their break-through song, Swim. Enjoy!

Tags: mick's pick, new music, surfer blood

CorinBAM!

Posted by: Mick on: 1 March 2010

In: Art | Canberra | Music | Photos | Reviews 4 Comments

It has been one hell of a weekend.

I spent it out at Corinbank. A music festival unlike any other.

Not only was I an avid punter keen to see You Am I, Urthboy and Clare Bowditch, I was also a 'Corinteer'. I put my name down to volunteer at the event late last year assuming that I would have little chance of actually doing it. Not only did I get a chance to volunteer, I was assigned to the Rangers & Communication team which involves roaming the site, checking everything is churning along okr and generally being the eyes and ears on the ground for the organisers and comms team.

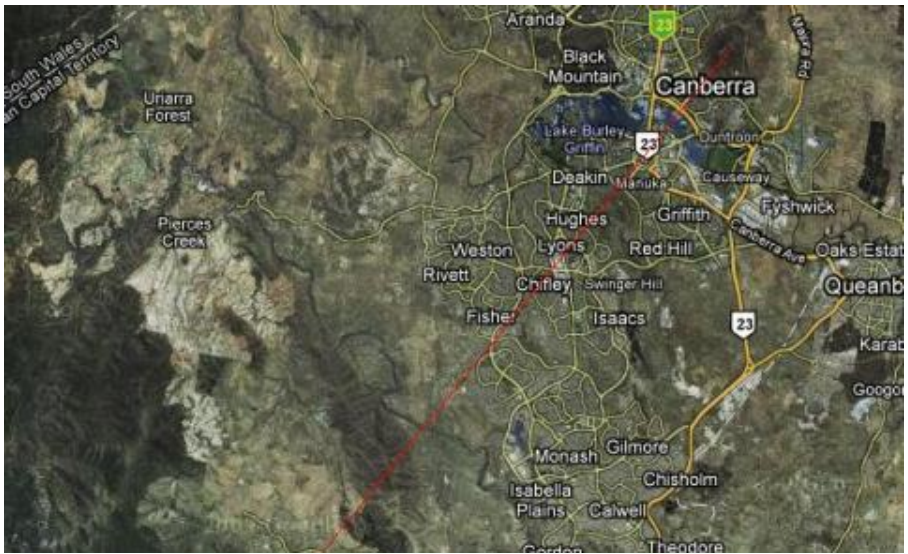
Disappointingly I have not been to that many festivals, and never a multi-day camp-out festival. Splendour, Falls, Woodford.. I haven't been to any of them. I realise that is a major failing on my part. So with the chance to go to a 3 day festival in my own backyard, how could I not go?

I pitched my tent on Friday and we were shown around the site by the managing director of the festival. With very few people around I was finding it hard to imagine what it'd be like with thousands of people arriving over the next day or so. There are 2 main stages at either end of the large Corin Forest site with a snake like trail of creative campsites, stalls, workshops and small stages along the way.

Creative campsites is an initiative to let the public contribute their own ideas to the festival. People could create their own little site or stall in exchange for discounted tickets. There was an advice tent, a hacky sack site, artistic stalls, a letter writing area (I haven't heard a typewriter in years!), twister, solar powered ovens and shitloads more. This area was pumping during the days on Saturday and Sunday. Always something going on.

At the far end of the snake lies the Gibraltar Grove stage. Nestled in amongst the forest is a wooden stage that almost feels like it grew there. This stage is where I would go on to discover such musical gems as Alice Cottee, Anarchist Duck, Space Party and the Ellis Collective. The natural ampitheatre surrounded by giant gums was the perfect backdrop to beautiful music.

I was also informed that the angle of the stage is perfectly aligned with the Mt. Ainslie to Parliament House axis. Google Maps seems to back this up:



Very cool!

The main action of the weekend occurs down at the main ‘Billy Billy’ stage. Food, clothing, art, ‘happy herb’ and massage stalls dot the area. This whole area is shadowed by spectacularly angled gum trees. You can’t look anywhere over the weekend without seeing nature which is what makes this festival feel so special.

The festival is very focussed on the creed of ‘leave no waste’. To support this there are bins located everywhere with the standard recycling and general waste bins but also with compost bins into which all plates, cutlery and even plastic bio-degradable beer cups can be tossed. The message obviously works as I saw barely any trash on the ground throughout the weekend. People are obviously conscious of the fact that they are responsible for their own waste. It’s great to see.

During a couple of my shifts I worked with the ‘Rat Patrol’ who are in charge of waste for the festival. Filled bins are swapped with empty ones and dumped into 1 of 2 skip bins, or a compost pile. Proof of the compost option are evident with a compost garden grown from the previous years pile. I hope my home compost will actually become useful one of these days.

This team does an amazing job at keeping the site clean. No overflowing bins at all and with the sheer number of bins this is not an easy feat. I am hugely impressed with the effort these guys put in. I did a 3 hr shift on the Rat Patrol and I was absolutely buggered. Some sort of wheelie-bin-towing-bike will definitely have to be invented!

At the core of this festival is a team of passionate people that invest a massive amount of time, effort, sweat and love into making it happen. I was glad to be able to contribute a tiny amount of my time to helping it happen this year, but these guys live and breathe the festival for most of the year. The positive vibe and smiling faces of people are the payback for all the hard work. More than one artist commented on the positivity of the crowd and Tim Rogers (of You Am I) made mention that usually he deals with objects being thrown at him as well as aggro’d up bone-heads in the crowd rather than smiling faces.

Overall the pace of the weekend is languid at best, possibly contributed by the distinct smell in the air. I think the fastest I saw anyone move was when a short sharp thunder storm hit during Clare Bowditch’s set. Whilst hundreds huddled under the beer tent, dozens more danced away in the rain. Bowditch made a comment that watching people dancing in the rain like that will stay in her memory for a long time.

Her set was fanastic. She showed off a new single from the upcoming album, and pulled out some oldies which had the crowd singing along.

You Am I seemed to play a fairly diverse set. Whilst they inevitably rolled out the obvious favourites ‘Rumble’, ‘Berlin Chair’ and ‘Cathy’s Clown’, they played a bunch of tracks that I don’t think the crowd recognised including a few off their 2008 album that received very little airplay.

The musical highlight of the weekend for me was Urthboy’s performance on the Saturday night. Being a long time ‘Herd’ fan I was keen to see both Urthboy and Ozi Batla (Astronomy Class) doing their things separately. As a bonus we got Hermitude on the decks as well, often jumping on stage with Urthboy and Jane Tyrrell. Man, did they look like they were having fun. He was just non-stop for the whole hour and belted out his hits and heaps of other top stuff from his 3 albums. I was front row for the set and looking back, I could see how pumped the crowd were. Urthboy obviously noticed as well as he jumped (well, stepped off the stage and walked) into the crowd for the last song. The vibe was awesome!

Whilst the music was a major reason people were there, I think it's the festival as a whole that pulls people out to the bush for a few days. There's a definite community feel to the place. You see familiar faces all weekend and by the Sunday night you feel like everyone's your friend.

For me personally I went to the festival by myself and only knew about 3 or 4 other people going. I pitched a tent by myself. I usually ate by myself and I generally walked around by myself, but everytime I sat down at a performance or a table to eat I managed to strike up a convo with someone and got to hear some great stories and chat about the festival.

Being a 'Corinteer' I met some really great fellow volunteers as well as getting to hang with some of the organisers on the Sunday night. For me this was a huge highlight as I got to see some of what makes a festival like this tick and to share in the passion of creating something that thousands of people enjoy.

I think it's awesome that someone could sit down and go, "I'm going to start a festival". You've gotta have guts and a buttload of talent and help to pull it off successfully. Dan and his team have pulled off 3 years of Corinbank and it doesn't look like stopping in a hurry. This make me damn happy cause it means I'll get to do it all again next year!

Tags: Canberra, Clare Bowditch, Corinbank, Festival, Music, Ozi Batla, Urthboy, You Am I

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